

[Citizens' Mixed Sentiments Flavor Pence Town Hall Visit](#)

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Greensburg — They came to hear what he had to say. Some came to applaud, others to boo, but all came with deep concerns, not just for their country but for themselves as well as their friends and neighbors.

After his speech at the Greensburg Community Learning Center, U.S. Rep Mike Pence (R-6th District) opened the Town Hall Meeting to the public for questions, comments and concerns.

The first comment came from a woman who lost her job of 27 years to the recent trend of downsizing and outsourcing that has plagued the economy. She told Pence the harsh realities of her life, struggling to make ends meet with unemployment, worrying about insurance, trying to advance herself through government-funded retraining educational programs. However, she noted it felt as if Pence and everyone in Washington did not care about her or anyone who is struggling with the current economic situation.

"We are out there with no insurance, no benefits of any kind, everything is this world erasing and nobody cares. They just want to keep taking and taking and taking," she said. "When it comes to the common person, nobody up there cares...You talk about our children and our grandchildren, and I totally, totally agree, but you better stop for one second and you better look at all these people in this room because we're here, right now, and we need your help that we do not get."

Pence responded by saying he was glad to hear she was participating in the program. He noted the nine percent unemployment and struggling economy within the state makes things difficult. However, he said, just like her situation, there was no easy fix to the economy.

"There is no easy answer to what's happening in the economy today. It's going to have to take hard choices. We're going to have to embrace policies that would encourage people to invest in ways that will create jobs in the Hoosier state," Pence said.

Ruth Ainsworth followed and asked Pence when he was going to announce he was running for governor. Pence laughed off the sentiments before hinting at a possible move home.

"You know I think we have the best governor in America right now. Mitch Daniels has done a brilliant job laying the foundation of fiscal responsibility for Indiana. I believe we have the opportunity to begin to pursue policies that will begin to get the Indiana economy growing," Pence said. "This is not a political meeting, but I will tell you my family and I are seriously considering what might be next. The idea of coming home and continuing to serve the people of Indiana is something we're praying about, thinking about, and we'll let you know."

Pence also fielded a number of specialty questions from health care to EPA regulations to oil reserves within the country, advising each person to contact his press secretary and he would respond with the appropriate answer in a few days.

With each issue, Pence noted each cut is causing a sense of separation at a time when Americans need to be unified in the sacrifices they will have to make to right the economy.

"The only way we're going to move forward is shared sacrifice. I do believe the fairest way to deal with the mounting budget crisis is through across the board cuts," Pence said. "If we all felt we were all in it together, and we're all doing what needed to be done to do right by these kids, we'd all do it. So long as we continue the piece meal approach...I think we're going to have these arguments and it's going to be very difficult to trim."

Mayor Gary Herbert ended the question period with a query of his own. He took issue with

NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), which passed in 1994, as the beginning of America's manufacturing downfall. He asked what Congress can do to place America, especially Indiana, back on the same playing field as China and other international companies that don't have the same costs or regulations as American businesses.

"It's the heartland of America competing with China and India and we're losing that fight right now," Pence said. "If you open the door for businesses to leave and give them every reason why they should, don't be surprised when they leave."

Pence said Congress must make doing business in America more profitable. EPA regulations need to be relieved he said, and corporate taxes and health care costs need to be addressed to encourage business to keep jobs within America.

"It's all about jobs," Pence said. "We can figure all of these problems out - fiscal and social, foreign policy, monetary policy - if there's food on the table for the family. If we've got opportunities, if our kids have opportunities to get a job. If my imperfect son-in-law is able to find a job within the same area code to raise my perfect grandchildren, everything's right in the world. That's got to be the focus and that will continue to be my focus."